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Kennedy's Viet Plea: Patience

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PRESIDENT-TO-PRESIDENT—From opposite sides of the world President Kennedy and President Ngo Dinh Diem speaks of war and peace in South Viet Nam. The strange dialogue is deeply disturbed by arrests of students and other repressive acts in South Viet Nam. Inexorably, the Communist-provoked war pays no heed to arguments. But the dialogue goes on.

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From the Herald Tribune Bureau

WASHINGTON.

President Kennedy said last night that it would not be helpful to reduce American aid to South Viet Nam at this time.

A cut in aid, Mr. Kennedy conceded, in a television interview, might possibly force the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem to make certain changes favored by the United States.

"On the other hand," he said, "you might have a situation which could bring about a collapse. Strongly in our mind is what happened in case of China at the end of World War II, where China was lost, a weak government became increasingly unable to control events. We don't want that."

Urging patience and counseling against American withdrawal from Viet Nam, the President summarized his feelings about the situation in these terms:

"I think in the case of South Viet Nam we have been dealing with a government which is in control, has been in control for 10 years. In addition, we have felt for the last two years that the struggle against the Communists was going better. Since June, however, the difficulties with the Buddhists, he has been concerned about a deterioration, particularly in the Saigon area, which hasn't been

"So we are faced with the problem of wanting to protect the area against the Communists. On the other hand, we have to deal with the government there. That produces a kind of ambivalence in our efforts which exposes us to some criticism. We are using our influence to persuade the government there to take those steps which will win back support. That takes some time and we must be patient, we must persist."

The President was interviewed by David Brinkley and Chet Huntley on film, which was later shown on the Huntley-Brinkley news show over the NBC network. A week ago, Mr. Kennedy gave a similar interview to Walter Cronkite for CBS. Ostensibly the President granted the interviews to salute the expansion of the Huntley-Brinkley and the Cronkite network news shows from 15 minutes to 30 minutes daily.

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Earlier yesterday Richard J. Phillips, State Department press officer, said that the South Vietnamese government has been using "repressive measures" against some of its citizens. He also said, however, that "there have been no decisions to cut our aid to Viet Nam."

In his interview Mr. Kennedy declined to comment on published reports that the Central Intelligence Agency is continuing to help finance the Vietnamese special forces troops, under Col. Le Quang Tung, which recently stormed Saigon's Buddhist pagodas.

"Does CIA tend to make its own policy?" he was asked.

"No," the President replied, "that is the frequent charge, but it isn't so. Mr. (John A.) McCone, head of the CIA, sits in the National Security Council. We have had a number of meetings in the past few days about events in South Viet Nam. Mr. McCone participated in every one, and the CIA co-ordinates its efforts with the State Department and the Department of Defense."

The President was asked: "With so much of our prestige, money and so on committed in South Viet Nam, why can't we exercise a little more influence there?"

"We have some influence," he replied, "and we are attempting to carry it out. I think we don't—we can't expect these countries to do everything the way we want them to do. They have their own interest, their own personalities, their own tradition. We can't make everyone in our image, and there are a good many people who don't want to go in our image. In addition, we have ancient struggles between countries. In the case of India and Pakistan, we would like to have them settle Kashmir."

The President also made these other points:

1. He disagreed with former President Harry S. Truman's comment in New York that a tax cut should await a balanced budget. A cut is necessary, Mr. Kennedy argued, to assure that there will be no economic downturn.

2. He warned that the United States would be sounding "an uncertain trumpet" in the world if the Senate should reject the nuclear test-ban treaty.

3. He said that the civil rights bill is "reasonable" and "my judgment is that we will not divide this country politically into Negroes and whites."

Mr. Phillips' comment on Viet Nam at the State Department earlier referred to the government's seizure of high school students in Saigon for demonstrating against Diem policies.

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